

evidence, according to the Death Penalty Information Center in Washington.

Use of the death penalty has been steadily declining, and 17 states no longer have it on the books, with 5 of them abolishing it since 2007, said Richard C. Dieter, the center's executive director. Executions dropped to 43 last year from 98 in 1999.

"These innocence cases are the biggest single factor, because it has spread doubt throughout the system," Mr. Dieter said.

Mr. Bloodworth, a tireless public speaker who has visited state after state to lobby for repeal, handing out a 2004 book on his case, called "Bloodworth," has used his own experience to promote those doubts. "I think no single individual has changed as many minds as Kirk," said Jane Henderson, the director of Maryland Citizens Against State Executions, a lobbying group. "He's articulate, patient, and he's got a huge heart."

His homespun eloquence has unmistakable appeal, but his own tale is his most powerful argument. Prosecutors and jurors ignored glaring problems with witnesses—two were boys who did not pick Mr. Bloodworth out of a lineup—and dismissed five alibi witnesses who testified that he was home at the time of the murder.

"The adversarial system doesn't know who's guilty or who's innocent," Mr. Bloodworth said. "The millstone does not know who's under it."

At the Maryland Penitentiary in Baltimore, he could stretch out his arms and touch the sides of his cell. He stuffed paper in his ears at night to keep the cockroaches out. His skull was cracked by another inmate who swung a sock stuffed with batteries. He was still locked up when his mother died.

After his release, he was pardoned and was paid \$300,000 in compensation by the state. But even as he worked for death penalty abolition in other states, he became a regular visitor to Annapolis, pressing legislators to learn from his case. "I'm a walking reminder for them," he said.

Delegate Barbara A. Frush, a Maryland legislator for 19 years, said a visit from Mr. Bloodworth two years ago changed her mind about capital punishment, which she had long favored. "I sat across the desk from him and looked in his eyes and listened to his story," she said. "It sent shivers down my spine. I thought, I can't take the chance that I might send an innocent man to death."

This week, for the first time, he had a private visit with the longtime president of the State Senate, Thomas V. Mike Miller Jr., who has decided to allow a floor vote on the repeal bill. Mr. Bloodworth left the meeting more optimistic than ever.

From time to time, he has heard from the people who sent him to prison. A juror got in touch to apologize. One of the two lead homicide detectives sought him out; "it seemed like he wanted absolution," Mr. Bloodworth said. One of the prosecutors, S. Ann Brobst, who had called him "a monster" at trial, insisted on driving to the Eastern Shore to give him in person the news of the DNA hit on the actual murderer.

At the church hall, he turned from his own story to the prospects for action in Maryland.

"What do you smell?" he bellowed.

"Victory!" the advocates yelled back.

"It's time to close the case," Mr. Bloodworth declared, raising his arms in anticipation.

REMEMBERING ROBERT S. TELLALIAN

Mr. BLUMENTHAL. Mr. President, I rise today to pay tribute to Robert

Tellalian—an attorney, community advocate, and beloved family member and friend, who brought joy to many in Connecticut. He was a true community leader in a very timeless, enduring way—wisely guiding civic organizations, unstintingly contributing time and energy, and enthusiastically giving of his great spirit and good humor.

After helping the Goodwill of Western and Northern Connecticut to incorporate in 1951, Mr. Tellalian served on its board for many years. He also connected with Goodwill's clients and staff personally on the frontlines in quite another way. Donning a red suit and beard for the annual Goodwill Christmas party, he shared his good energy and holiday spirit with those who needed it the most—the poor and suffering and the Bridgeport employees who had seen it all. He was given Goodwill's Leadership Award in 2011. And, as if he had planned it, he passed away this past year on Christmas Day at age 91.

He earned a Soldier's Medal for Valor in World War II, fighting at the Battle of the Bulge in the Army's 10th Armored Division, but instead, chose to be remembered through seemingly minor but extremely meaningful gestures of kindness and personal connection.

Mr. Tellalian was born in New Haven and raised in Bridgeport. After attending Yale University and the University of Connecticut School of Law, he along with his brother, Judge Aram H. Tellalian, Jr., founded the firm, Tellalian & Tellalian. The Tellalian's firm was a fixture in Bridgeport, and Robert practiced family and estate law for his entire career. The firm later moved to Trumbull, where Mr. Tellalian continued his involvement. This fact and many others demonstrate his uncommon dedication to tradition, intense loyalty for his community and the practice of law, and strong, authentic relationship with his brother and countless loved ones.

Throughout his life, he was intensely involved in a number of charities and local organizations throughout Connecticut, especially in Bridgeport and Easton. In addition to the Goodwill of Western and Northern Connecticut, he was an active member of the Yale Club of Eastern Fairfield County, the Bridgeport Area Foundation, and the United Way. He also served as the secretary of the Easton Senior Center Board of Directors and the president of the Council of Churches of Greater Bridgeport.

Aside from his tremendous contributions to charity and community, Mr. Tellalian would most like to be remembered, I believe, for his love of music. He had great pride for the Greater Bridgeport Symphony and the joy it added to Connecticut. He was a man who, in his role of chairman of the board, would greet patrons in the lobby of the concert hall for decades. One time, when interviewed by the Connecticut Post, he commented that the opportunity to guest-conduct the Sym-

phony was "the biggest thrill of [his] life." Additionally, he was an avid acapella singer, and treasured the memories he made with his barbershop quartet—the Eastonaires—with whom he performed throughout the State and country, even on the White House lawn during a Fourth of July picnic hosted by President and Nancy Reagan. And, for more than 50 years, he sang in the church choir—most recently for the United Congregational Church in Bridgeport—where he and his wife, Jean, who died this past November, were longtime congregants and celebrated their 60th wedding anniversary.

Last month, the United Congregational Church hosted a musical memorial service for Mr. Tellalian. Almost 100 singers and instrumentalists gathered from around the region to volunteer their time in tribute to a man they loved.

Robert Tellalian was generous of spirit and filled with compassion, dedicating much of his life to the happiness of others. He loved life, and lifted others up.

Today, I invite my colleagues to honor the life of a man who will be deeply missed, but whose spirit of kinship will live on in all he touched.

ADDITIONAL STATEMENTS

CONGRATULATING KONNER ROBINSON AND ANTHONY SCHRECENGOST

• Mr. HELLER. Mr. President, today I wish to recognize two of Nevada's finest, Konner Robinson and Anthony Schrecengost, for being named Nevada's top two youth volunteers of 2013 by the Prudential Spirit of Community Awards. For 18 years, this nationwide award program has partnered with the National Association of Secondary School Principals to honor outstanding acts of volunteerism.

Konner is a junior at Sage Ridge School in Reno, NV. He created a fund to provide grants to local schools to enable them to offer technology-based learning tools to financially disadvantaged students. Konner was inspired to start this project when he discovered one of his classmates could not complete her physics homework because she could not afford to buy a graphing calculator. I commend his commitment to providing access to technology for all students. All Americans should follow Konner's lead and work to ensure our schools have the resources they need to provide our children with the best education possible.

Anthony, an eighth grader at Sig Rogich Middle School in Las Vegas, NV, has been a committed volunteer for the Food Allergy & Anaphylaxis Network, FAAN, for the past 3 years. He has been raising both money and awareness to help those who, like him, suffer from food allergies. Anthony's motivation to work on behalf of others who share his condition is inspiring.